Snapped

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This is an AU oneshot from the Team 8 universe, prompted by Brandon's plot bunny. What would it take to make Hinata completely snap?

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Introduction
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Hello, welcome to a plot bunny gone wild. There was a discussion on my yahoo group regarding 'Team 8' and what it would take to make Hinata finally snap. I threw out a few suggestions and Brandon posted the first section of this story to the group. It was nicely dramatic, and it also preyed on the back of my mind. A couple of days later, on the way to work, the rest of the story popped into my head. I knew I had to write it up or I would never get anything else done, so here it is. This is, at best, an AU of Team 8, or an AU of an AU of Naruto. It has no bearing on anything related to any of my other stories, and is intended solely as a one-shot. It is set in Hinata's sixteenth year.

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She sat there, staring blankly at body. It couldn't happen. Not to him.

He never failed, never gave up. Nothing had ever beaten him.

And yet, there it was. The body of Naruto, her beloved Naruto.

Looking up, her mind couldn't register what she saw. Uchiha Itachi stood there, the seal that had just moments before been on Naruto now on him. The Kyuubi had survived the transfer, but it had literally ripped up the soul of her Naruto when the kitsune was forcefully removed and placed in a new host.

Itachi nodded at someone behind her, and then turned around and walked off.

Turning to look at the person, the man who had helped to kill her

Naruto. She hadn't known that if you kept attempting to close Tenketsu points after they were closed, you could actually destroy them. 64 hands of Hakke had closed Naruto's Tenketsu points. 128 had damaged them. Then he had taken it a step further than even

Neji had been able to. 256 Hands of Hakke. She had activated her Byakagun in time to see the horror. His Tenketsu had literally disappeared from his body.

Looking at the man who she had once considered her Father, something in her mind changed. It wasn't a snap, it wasn't even a shift. Like her love's Tenketsu points, it just simply disappeared. Some would have called it her conscience. Others would refer to it as restraint. To Hinata, it hadn't been mind-altering. It had been an epiphany. She was to dispense justice to those who had harmed her love.

She stood up, the man saying something about it being better now. It was meaningless without him here. She would dispense her justice, and then she would follow him to wherever he had gone.

Her first attack had nearly ended Hyuuga Haishi's life. He barely avoided a chakra-strike powerful enough to liquefy his heart. Daily sparring with Naruto-kun hadn't given her Chakra reserves to match his, but it definitely hadn't hurt. The chakra she'd expended had been intense enough to be visible, even to those without Byakugan

Hiashi, for she would *never* call him father again, spun away from the attack, but her follow-up blow to his leading shoulder ripped through muscle and bone, even as she stopped the spin that presaged his Kaiten attack. He leapt backwards from her third strike, alighting on the opposite side of the courtyard with a grace that belied his speed. His face was expressionless as he opened his mouth.

"You may collect the second half of your payment now," he said loudly.

In a swirl of leaves and the tinkle of phantom bells, Uchiha Itachi appeared.

Hinata circled to her right, around the Akatsuki member, closing in on her father. She had no illusions about her ability to kill the man who'd finished what her father had started, especially now that he had the Kyuubi as well. But she would be damned to hell if she would let her father get away with his cowardly attack on her beloved. He'd struck Naruto down even as the boy tried to protect the Hyuuga compound from a 'surprise' attack from Itachi. Neither of them suspected the treachery to which her father would stoop in order to get his way.

Worse it appeared that he might still escape her vengeance. The shoulder wound slowed his movements, but Itachi was far too fast for her to avoid. The red-eyed missing-nin seemed to enjoy playing cat and mouse with her now, pouncing every time she drew close to her target. She could barely parry the laziest of his strikes, and worse, she realized that he wasn't even trying to seriously hurt her.

And then it was over

A two-fingered strike to the nerve cluster in her shoulder rendered her left arm limp and unresponsive. His follow-up blow to her hip was both disturbingly familiar and equally devastating. She had to support all of her weight on her right leg to remain standing, but she had no semblance of a stance nor mobility. Hinata raised her right hand into a guard position, but a thrown senbon numbed it as well.

"She's a fighter," Itachi observed.

"She's weak by our standards," her father snapped, "and her rebellious sentimentality makes her useless to the clan. Do with her what you will."

If a glare alone could kill, she would have achieved her vengeance right then. "I'm not as weak as either of you cowards. Naruto was twice the man you will ever be, Hiashi, and I feel soiled to have even borne the Hyuuga name," she announced in a glacial voice.

Hiashi's eyes widened and his face went red as he reached for her, but he stopped short at a curt gesture from Itachi. "She is, as you

have said, mine," the psychopathic Uchiha whispered. "None shall mark her but me, and my hand alone shall be the one that breaks her." He reached toward her, his hand suddenly glowing with red chakra, and Hinata carefully placed her tongue between her jaws and prepared to bite it off. She couldn't give him any warning or he would stop her suicide.

As Hyuuga Hinata's jaw muscles tensed, Itachi's hand stopped an inch from the front of her jacket. Itachi's eyes showed a flicker of confusion before his hand arced to the side with blinding speed.

"Hurgk!" was the sound Hiashi made as the devastating blow crushed his larynx and all but decapitated him. Blood poured from his mouth and he collapsed backwards.

Itachi stared at his hand in horror, but then his eyes grew even wider as he threw his head back. Cracks appeared in his skin, starting at his left hand and running up under his sleeve with lightning speed. The cracks raced up his neck a moment later and covered his face. Red light began to filter through the dark lines as they grew wider.

Uchiha Itachi opened his mouth, but whether it was to scream, curse, or beg for mercy would never be known. Hinata closed her eyes as the man's body exploded in a fountain of gore. Most of the… debris… traveled upward, but a few gobbets and droplets struck her face and clothes. Even before she opened her eyes, she could sense the red glow – a light bright enough to be felt through her eyelids.

Before her was the Kyuubi, in all its flaming glory. A fox made of fiery red chakra, with blue highlights here and there, raised its head to the heavens and roared its defiance. Hinata winced as the bellow left her ears ringing. Her limbs slowly recovering from the nerve strikes, Hinata slowly stepped back, squinting up at the bodiless spirit that loomed over the Hyuuga main house.

"The arrogance!" the fox roared, its snarl modulating into words now, "The Hubris! To think he could contain *my* power? As strong as his

coils were, they were cramped and fragile, compared to my former host. It's an insult to one of my stature to think he could forcibly bind me to such a ridiculously weak being!"

"Bastard Fox! That's the first time you compliment me, and you had to wait until I was dead?" another voice echoed from the burning maelstrom before her, and Hinata felt her heart seize up within her chest.

"N-naruto?" she whispered in a quavering voice.

"Hinata!" Naruto's voice called out, echoing around the courtyard. "After Itachi started the ritual, we had a quick talk inside my mind. He said I couldn't survive him being pulled out of me, so he offered to take me with him. Itachi-baka couldn't even tell there were two of us."

Hinata clenched her fists to keep from hyperventilating. Her Naruto's body was dead, but his… spirit? soul? was still alive. That was something. That was more hope than she had a few minutes ago, but it wasn't enough. "You can't be dead, damn you Naruto!" she suddenly shouted.

That was enough to even get the attention of the nine-tailed fox. It peered down at her. Hinata could make out more details, but she couldn't tell if it just her eyes adjusting or if the spirit's manifestation was getting dimmer.

"Hinata? I…" Naruto's voice trailed off. There were too many things left to say, for both of them. Hinata swallowed and almost let out a bitter laugh. His voice sounded very odd coming from the fox.

Hinata shook her head, refusing to give in to tears now. Then she looked up again. The fox was getting dimmer. "What's happening to you?" she asked in alarm.

"Without a body to sustain it, my chakra is dispersing," the Kyuubi said in a resigned tone. "We knew this would happen after we

destroyed Itachi, but better to die free than be used for what he had planned."

"Y-you're dying?" Hinata gasped. No! This could not be happening again.

"We're already dead," the fox replied with a dark laugh. "It's just taking a while for it to catch up to us."

"Neh, Hinata, don't listen to him," Naruto cut in. Then his voice took on a more somber note. "I-I want you to take care of yourself, and look out for Shino, and Konohamaru, and…"

"No!" Hinata yelled. "I'm not letting you go again! Kyuubi, what about me? Would I make a good host?"

The rapidly dimming fox looked her over. "Well, you're a bit old, but not fully matured yet, so there should be some elasticity remaining. All that training with the brat didn't hurt either. If we are careful… but it's going to cause a great deal of pain, pain you will take a long time recovering from."

Hinata spared a glance toward the crumpled corpse of her father. "I am used to pain," she whispered.

"No!" Naruto shouted, "Hinata you don't have to do this! You-"

"Shut up, brat! You are out-voted," the fox roared as he descended on the unresisting kunoichi. Hinata screamed and collapsed to the ground, racked by convulsions.

After a period of time that *felt* like days, her body sagged in relief and her eyes opened again. Eyes that had changed from pale lavender to a dark reddish-purple. She blinked and smiled. "Hush, both of you."

Epilogue…

Hyuuga Hinata, the Rokudaime, smiled down at her beloved city, one she'd protected for decades since Tsunade retired. She was an object of mystery to most of her subordinates; only the head of the Aburame Clan could claim to be a close friend, and he guarded her secrets well.

She lived alone in the Hokage's quarters, but did not seem lonely to those she met. She ate lunch every day at a well-known noodle stand, and often met there with friends from her youth. (The survivors of the "Rookie 9" were unusually effective at gathering information and making sure their Hokage was aware of threats to their village, both from within and from without.)

In fact, the head of the chuunin detail at the Hokage's tower could not recall a morning when their leader hadn't greeted them with a radiant smile on her face. When he worked up the courage to ask her why this was so, she did something very odd. She blushed, something he hadn't *ever* seen her do, and said that she always had very interesting dreams.